

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A wafer processing apparatus for processing a wafer transferred from a clean box having an access opening to allow accessing an inside of the clean box and a lid to close the access opening wherein the inside of the clean box is separated from a circumstance of the outside of the clean box by closing the access opening with the lid, said wafer processing apparatus comprising:

a chamber pressurized to a pressure higher than a pressure of an outside of the chamber;

a first opening formed on a part of a wall of the chamber for transferring a wafer between the clean box and the chamber through said first opening; and

a door member capable of holding the lid of the clean box, wherein said door member moves between a closed position to close the access opening and said first opening and an open position to open the access opening and said first opening;

wherein an outer periphery of said door member is larger than a an outer periphery of said first opening to cover a whole part of said first opening from the inside of said chamber,

wherein [[,]] a first gap is formed between the wall of the chamber and an outer periphery portion of said door member which portion is larger than the outer periphery of said first opening at the closed position,

wherein a stopping device is provided to stop the clean box a predetermined distance away from the outer surface of the wall to thereby form a second gap between the clean box and an outer surface of the wall of the chamber,

wherein [[,]] a flow rate of gas flowing through the first gap from an inside of the chamber to an outside of the chamber is substantially equal to a flow rate of gas flowing out through the second gap from the first opening to an outside environment.

Claim 2 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein a dimension of said first gap and an inside pressure of the chamber are defined such that the gas does not flow into an inside of the clean box through said first gap.

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said door member is closed, said first gap is maintained in gas fluidical communication with an inside and an outside of the chamber.

Claims 4-12 (Canceled).

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 1, further comprising:

one or more gas flow paths formed at least at a vicinity of edges of said door, wherein said first gap is in gas-fluidical communication with said one or more gas flow paths, and

wherein a flow rate of a gas flowing through the gas flow path is substantially equal to a flow rate of the gas flowing from the inside of the chamber to the outside of the chamber through said first opening when the door member is opened.

Claim 14 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the first gap is uniformly formed along a side of an outer peripheral shape of the door member.

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the door member is in substantially the shape of a square.

Claim 16 (Previously Presented): A wafer processing apparatus according to claim 13, wherein the first gap is uniformly formed along a side of an outer peripheral shape of the lid when the lid is inserted through said first opening.